

Docket No.: 22197-00009-US

Application No. 10/052,356
Amendment dated February 1, 2006
Reply to Office Action of November 11, 2005

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-16 are pending. Claim 2 was canceled in a previous response. Claims 1 and 11-13 are amended.

Claim Amendments

Claims 1 and 11-13 have been amended to clarify that the deformable layer is distinct from the retainer and that the deformable material deforms to form a seal. The claims, as amended, are supported by the original specification and drawings. No new matter has been added.

Claim Rejections - 3 U.S.C. §102/§103

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 3-5, 7-10 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Chambers et al. (US 5,406,983).

Claim 1 has been amended to recite "a retainer retaining said pipe within said housing when the pipe is pushed into the housing; and a layer of a relatively deformable material *distinct from the retainer* on at least a part of both an inner surface and an outer surface of said housing, wherein *said layer on said inner surface deforms against an outside of said pipe to form a sealing engagement.*" Claim 13 recites "injecting a first material of a relatively hard plastics material to form a housing of said coupling with an integral retainer; and *subsequently injecting a second, softer, deformable material* to form a layer on said harder material both on an inside and outside of said housing, *wherein said deformable material is distinct from said integral retainer*, and wherein *said layer on said inside of said housing* surrounds said integral retainer and *deforms into sealing engagement with an outside of a pipe* when the pipe is pushed into the housing." Thus, claims 1 and 13 clearly call for a deformable material that is separate and distinct from the retainer and forms an inner layer on an inside of the housing that deforms to form a seal with the outside of the pipe. The patent to Chambers et al. does not disclose or suggest these features.

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In Chambers et al., the screw thread is both a retainer and a sealing means. There is no provision in the Chambers et al. disclosure for a layer distinct from the retainer that forms a seal with the pipe. Furthermore, screw thread is incompressible, and therefore is not deformable like the presently recited deformable layer. For at least these reasons, claims 1 and 13 are allowable over Chambers et al. Claims 3-5 and 7-10 depend from claim 1, and are therefore allowable as well.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 3-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Petty et al. (US 4,923,227) in view of Chambers et al.

As stated above, claims 1 and 13 call for a deformable material that is separate and distinct from the retainer and forms an inner layer on an inside of the housing that deforms to form a seal with the outside of the pipe. Claims 11 and 12 also recite a deformable material that is separate and distinct from the retainer and forms an inner layer on an inside of the housing that deforms to form a seal with the cooperating member/outside of the pipe. Particularly, claim 11 recites "[a] coupling for connecting one end of a corrugated pipe to a cooperating member, said coupling comprising: two spring catches on opposite sides engaging between corrugations on an outside of said pipe when the pipe is pushed within the coupling; and *a continuous layer of a deformable material, distinct from said spring catches* and bonded with both an inside and outside of said housing to form an internal, tapering sealing surface *which deforms against and forms a seal with the cooperating member...*" Claim 12 recites "retaining means retaining said pipe within said housing when the pipe is pushed within the coupling; and *a layer of a relatively deformable material distinct from the retaining means* and molded onto at least a part of both an inner surface and an outer surface of said housing, *wherein said layer on said inner surface deforms against an outside surface of said pipe* in said bore, and thereby forms a seal with the outside surface of said pipe."

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As admitted by the Examiner, Petty et al. do not teach or suggest a layer of deformable material on both an inner surface and an outer surface of the housing. Thus, Petty et al. do not teach or suggest the claimed apparatus and method, which include a deformable layer on both an inner surface and an outer surface of the housing, wherein the deformable layer is distinct from the retainer/spring catches and forms a seal with the cooperating member/outside of the pipe. As discussed above, Chambers et al. also do not teach or suggest a deformable layer on both an inner surface and an outer surface of the housing, wherein the deformable layer is distinct from the retainer/spring catches and forms a seal with the cooperating member/outside of the pipe. Thus, the disclosures as combined by the Examiner do not render claims 1, 11, 12 and 13 obvious. Claims 3-10 and 14-16 depend from claim 1, and are therefore also patentable over the combination of Petty et al. and Chambers et al.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 22-0185, under Order No. 22197-00009-US from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: February 13, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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